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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

Revised estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized

Seventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 25 November 1997 on revised estimates in respect of five good offices and peacemaking missions of which the Security Council is seized: Office of the Representative of the Secretary-General in Cambodia, United Nations Political Office for Somalia, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia and United Nations Office in Burundi (A/C.5/52/24). During its consideration of the matter, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General who provided additional information.

2. The Advisory Committee notes that the report of the Secretary-General is being submitted in the context of actions taken by the Security Council regarding good offices, peace-making and preventive diplomacy. As indicated in paragraph 1 of that report, resources related to such missions have been provided for under the commitment authority granted by the General Assembly to the Secretary-General in its resolutions on unforeseen and extraordinary expenditures relating to the maintenance of peace and security.

3. As indicated in paragraph 2 of the report of the Secretary-General, the continuity of those activities as well as the repetition of their mandate renewals is such that they would appear to fall fully within the spirit of provisions of annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 relating to political activities of a "perennial" character whose mandates are renewed annually. The Advisory Committee sought confirmation of the perennial nature of those mandates as well as details on renewal or review by the Security Council and requested information on the status of the mandate of each mission

(including when the mission was established). The requested information has not been received in its entirety; the Advisory Committee requests that it be given to the Fifth Committee during its consideration of the matter and that in future it be provided together with the related budget estimates.

4. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that a number of missions referred to in the report of the Secretary-General of 25 November 1997 deal, inter alia, with post-conflict peace-building. In this connection, the Committee recalls the provision of General Assembly resolution 47/120 B of 20 September 1993, section V, paragraph 4, which "stresses that activities related to post-conflict peace-building should be carried out within a well-defined time-frame".

5. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/120 A of 18 December 1992, recognized the role of the General Assembly and the Security Council in matters relating to peace and preventive diplomacy. The Committee also recalls paragraph 2 of its report of 5 December 1997 (A/52/7/Add.2), in which it pointed out that additional requirements relating to the maintenance of peace and security that are funded from the regular budget are currently treated through the mechanism of additional appropriation outside the scope of the contingency fund, in accordance with Assembly resolution 41/213, annex I, paragraph 11.

6. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 18 and table 1 of the report of the Secretary-General of 25 November 1997 (A/C.5/52/24) that the total cost of these missions is estimated at $9,315,100 net. During the consideration of the report, the Committee was informed that the amount of $9,315,100 did not include the amount of $87,600 relating to an interim cost-of-living bonus paid to local staff in Burundi (see para. 12 below). The Committee points out that the report of the Secretary-General should have contained detailed information on expenditure in 1996-1997 together with a justification for any increase. Expenditure data for the five missions was requested by the Committee and is provided in the annex below.

7. If the procedure recommended by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 6 of its report of 5 December 1997 (A/52/7/Add.2) is accepted by the General Assembly, then the related requirements would first be included in the proposed budget outline and subsequently presented in the proposed programme budget. The Committee requests that at the time of its consideration of the budget, additional information be supplied to it along the lines of reports on the financing of peacekeeping operations (the current report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (A/C.5/52/21) is a good example of what the Committee would expect).

8. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 19 of the report of the Secretary-General of 25 November 1997 that the amount of $9,315,100 net is requested under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that while the Department of Political Affairs will have the overall responsibility for these missions, the Field Administration and Logistics Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will be responsible for their operational aspect. The Committee recalls that in paragraphs II.8 and II.9 of its first report on the proposed programme budget

for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/7 (Chap. II, Part II)) and paragraph 23 of its second report (A/52/7/Add.1) on the report of the Secretary-General of 11 September 1997 (A/52/303), it pointed out that efforts should be made to avoid duplication and overlapping between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In this connection, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to review the matter, including, inter alia, the question of where these expenses should be budgeted, and to report to the General Assembly in the context of the proposed programme budget submission for the next biennium.

9. As indicated in table 1 of the report of the Secretary-General of 25 November 1997 (A/C.5/52/24), the cost estimates in the cases of missions in Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Burundi are for 1998 only, and in the case of the mission for Somalia they cover 1998-1999. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the periods assumed were based on the Secretary-General's judgement as to the expectation of continuity of the missions.

10. The Advisory Committee notes from table 2 of the report of the Secretary-General of 25 November 1997 that the proposed staffing table comprises 71 positions financed through general temporary assistance (39 international and 31 local staff and 1 military observer). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the proposed staff resources reflect an overall increase of 15 positions over the level for 1997.

11. As indicated in table 1 of the report of the Secretary-General, the total cost estimates for 1998-1999 for 71 positions amount to $7,046,600 (net of staff assessment), not including the amount of $87,600 relating to an interim cost-of-living bonus paid to local staff in Burundi (see para. 12 below). The Advisory Committee understands that this estimate is based on full occupancy of all posts throughout the biennium. In the opinion of the Committee, this is not likely to be the case and savings should arise.

12. With regard to the United Nations Office in Burundi, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1 (a) of annex V to the report of the Secretary-General of 25 November 1997 that local staff are paid an interim cost-of-living bonus of 79.22 per cent as well as a hazard duty station allowance at 20 per cent of the mid-point local salary scale. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the bonus that was approved following a comprehensive salary survey carried out by the United Nations Development Programme was being paid for a period of six months, from 1 July to 31 December 1997, and would be reviewed at the end of the six-month period. The Committee was also informed that the related cost ($87,600) of the bonus, equivalent to 79.22 per cent, was inadvertently excluded in the estimates.

13. In connection with premises, it is not clear to the Advisory Committee that there has been a concerted effort to take advantage of the presence of various United Nations entities in these locations to use common premises. The Committee requests that, in future, the extent to which the principle of common use of premises is being implemented should be indicated.

14. In the case of transport operations, the Advisory Committee believes that in some cases there is an excess of vehicles as compared with the staff

establishment, and trusts that the use of vehicles will be authorized in strict compliance with existing United Nations procedures. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that in Burundi, three of the vehicles were being used as spare parts. In this connection, the Committee notes that the estimates for insurance and maintenance, petrol and oil lubricants were based on all 23 vehicles shown for Burundi (A/C.5/52/24, annex V, para. 4). In view of this, the representatives of the Secretary-General indicated that the estimate under this item could be reduced by a total of $24,700, from $125,500 to $100,800.

15. Provision is made for air operations for Sierra Leone ($240,000), for Liberia ($100,000) and for Burundi ($82,400). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the 1996-1997 estimated expenditure for rental of aircraft in the case of Burundi amounted to $122,355, comprising expenditures of $44,455 in 1996 and $77,900 estimated for 1997. It is not clear to the Committee the extent to which the cost estimates for air operations take into account the existence of air services operated by other United Nations agencies in each of the mission areas. The Committee requests that, in future, the estimates should indicate the procurement of air service in relation to services available from other agencies in the area.

16. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the additional amount of $9.3 million under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 for the five missions, taking into account the comments and conclusions in the paragraphs above.

ANNEX

Expenditures of political missions

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1996	1997	1996-1997
Burundi	1 406.4	2 248.9	3 655.3
Cambodia	391.5	646.5	1 038.0
Liberia		518.5	518.5
Sierra Leone	352.4	556.2	908.6
Somalia	549.3	634.4	1 183.7
Total	2 699.6	4 604.5	7 304.1